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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NEW THINKING IN TAIWAN'S DIPLOMACY

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage May 9 on the latest development and investigation into Taiwan's Papua New Guinea (PNG) diplomatic fund scandal, and AIT Director Stephen Young's press conference. In terms of editorials and commentaries, in light of the PNG fund scandal, there has been public opinion urging that the Taiwan government adopt new and pragmatic thinking to eliminate Taiwan's notorious "dollar diplomacy." An op-ed in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" took the example of 'secret diplomacy' of the United States and urged Taiwan's incoming government to change the old way of conducting diplomacy. An editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" recommends that Taiwan's new government focus its efforts on cultivating relations with major countries, including the United States, instead of wasting money and effort on diplomatic relations that are instable. An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" provided arguments regarding China's mindset in limiting Taiwan's international space, and gave some recommendations to Taiwan's new government. End summary.

A) "Brokers Bullying; Failure in Governance"

Liao Kun-jung, a political science professor and dean of the Department of Political Science at Taiwan's National Chung Cheng University, opined in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (5/9):

"In fact, the United States as well is not short of experience in secret diplomacy. For example, [former United States] President Richard Nixon once sent [former United States] Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to visit Beijing secretly and betrayed Taiwan clandestinely. In order to fund the Nicaragua rebels, [former United States] President Ronald Reagan once deceived [the United States] Congress to conduct arms deals with Iran, which led to such a political crisis that Reagan almost had to step down. The United States' secret diplomacy basically walks on the edge of the law and tries to avoid the supervision of the [United States] Congress or the [scrutiny of the] media. However, when there is no supervision, [secret diplomacy] definitely falls into the ethical pitfalls. This kind of experience is not worth learning from.

"From 1971, after Taiwan withdrew from the United States, because of the isolation in diplomacy, [Taiwan's] government is almost affected with 'the illness of diplomatic isolation.' [It is because Taiwan] follows the United States' every lead and goes astray without notice that [Taiwan] has to establish diplomatic ties with countries in the world, and has a general superstition that [Taiwan] can only have international space by establishing diplomatic ties [with other countries]. Every one of [Taiwan's] successive Ministers of Foreign Affairs was forced to 'go all out in getting achievements by establishing diplomatic ties.' No matter whether a country is big, small, wealthy, poor, or even a small island, as long as [Taiwan] can establish diplomatic ties with it, [Taiwan] will go all out to pay out enormous amount of money and only stop when all the money is spent. Sparing nothing financially to win diplomatic ties is [Taiwan's] wrong [cognition], which holds that being able to

establish diplomatic ties is equivalent to having diplomacy and represents achievements in foreign affairs. As a result, the first priority that [Taiwan's President-elect] Ma [Ying-jeou] and [Taiwan's Vice President-elect Vincent] Siew's upcoming administration has to face after taking office is not how many diplomatic ties with how many countries [Taiwan] can add; instead, it is how [Taiwan] can beat the worry of the 'panic of diplomatic isolation'? ..."

B) "Not Like Getting Married; More Like Being A Sugar Daddy" [The original article satirizes that the way the Taiwan government squanders money in diplomacy makes all Taiwan's taxpayers like a sugar daddy]

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] editorialized (5/9):

"... Concentrating diplomatic funds on cultivating relations with the United States' ruling and opposition parties is the most important [task]. The closer relation we [Taiwan] have with the United States, the more difficult for China to bully Taiwan, or especially invade Taiwan militarily. Furthermore, if Taiwan has more bargaining chips when negotiating with China, there is greater space [for Taiwan] to maneuver in. Taiwan can take advantage of the relation between Taiwan and the United States as leverage to constrain China; [Taiwan] might as well take the relation between Taiwan and China as leverage to constrain the United States. Just as the United States does not want the relation between Taiwan and China to be too close, China does not want the relation between Taiwan and the United States to be too close. These are where our niches lie, and [we] can win for our national interests by playing these two levers. This will cost a lot, so [we] should concentrate finances instead of splitting our [financial] force to buy diplomatic ties with small countries. Besides, it is also very

important to purchase relations with Europe and Japan to form multiple poles composed of world powers in the international community to protect Taiwan's security and interests. ..."

C) "Is Dollar Diplomacy Even Worth It?"

Huang Su-jeu, an Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology at National Taipei University, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (5/9):

"... the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has set a strategic limit on the number of diplomatic allies it will allow Taiwan to retain. It does not allow Taiwan to join the UN, forge diplomatic ties with big countries, have more than about 20 diplomatic allies, or maintain due dignity in the international community. However, Beijing hasn't been in a rush to buy off all Taiwan's diplomatic allies either.

"No matter how much it suppresses Taiwan's international space, China has left those 20 diplomatic allies or so untouched. In other words, that is the number of Taiwanese allies China has decided it can tolerate. ..."

"However, if Beijing bought off all of Taiwan's diplomatic allies and isolated Taiwan totally, it might force a desperate Taipei to make a reckless move and officially declare independence. China would then have to resort to force to suppress the move toward independence, leading to international intervention and maybe even clashes between China and the US, striking a heavy blow to the Chinese economy. ..."

"However, if Taiwan manages to maintain diplomatic relations with a few countries, it is not because Taiwan is wealthier than China or because our diplomats are better, but because China has decided not to compete with us. It is all a matter of China unilaterally deciding whether or not it will allow Taiwan to keep some international space.

"So why would we want to spend a large amount of money forging futile diplomatic relations? Of course this does not mean that we should refuse to provide assistance for deprived countries.

"A rich country like Taiwan should take on the responsibility of

assisting poor countries. But the purpose of assistance should be to offer humanitarian assistance and build connections rather than to buy diplomatic relations, because we can never win over China."

YOUNG